

February 22, 2017

Dear Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Kelly Sasso and I live in Norwalk, CT. I am a cousin of two aging teenagers with developmental disabilities and I am also an Occupational Therapist in a public high school. I work directly, everyday, with a variety of individuals with disabilities from age 14 to 21 years old, who are all working towards their transition to the community and adulthood. I am testifying on the impact of the Governor's budget on people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

If funding for day programs and employment opportunities is cut, the options for my family members and students, following their graduation from the public schools, will be severely limited. With this significant decrease in funding, the already endless waitlists for vocational programs will grow and these individuals will be left with limited options for work or care during the day-time hours. Day programs and work opportunities provided by DDS gives these individuals purposeful vocation that is appropriate to their skill level and can build on their current repertoire of skills across all aspects of their life.

Please restore funding for day and employment services for new graduates!

And please support the Governor's proposal to invest \$3.8 million in the ID Partnership, which will help people on the DDS residential waiting list, support developing more residential options for people with I/DD and stabilize community-based supports.

Thank you for your time and efforts.

Sincerely,

Kelly Sasso, MS, OTR/L
Occupational Therapist
Loving cousin and educator
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